

# INFORMATION REPORT

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COUNTRY Korea  
SUBJECT Efforts of the Pro-Soviet North Korean Faction to Control the Government and the Army  
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1. In August 1950, CH'OE Yong-kon, then North Korean Minister of National Defense, insisted that North Korean troops should be withdrawn to the 38th Parallel, in view of the international situation and the military potential of the North Korean army. He was violently opposed by KIM Il-song and KIM Ch'aek, then a member of the North Korean Military Committee and commander of the troops in the field. As a result of advocating this policy, CH'OE was given only the minor post of Rear Services commander in the North Korean army general headquarters, and KIM Ch'aek took over actual direction of the armed forces, although he had had no military experience since his service as a guerrilla with the Chinese Communist forces in Manchuria before 1945. There was a rumor current that CH'OE had a dispute with KIM Il-song and had tried to shoot him, but was stopped by KIM Tu-pong, who happened to be present.\*
2. Finally, in mid-November 1950, CH'OE accused KIM Il-song and KIM Ch'aek of ignorance concerning military matters, and CH'OE was replaced by CHANG Si-u as rear service commander. KANG Kon, who had been a KIM Il-song man in Manchuria, was named front line commander. Other KIM Il-song supporters who were already in important positions included PAK Hon-il, deputy Minister of Internal Affairs; CH'OE Kyong-tok (崔敬德), commander of the North Korean force which occupied Seoul; and CH'OE Hyon (崔賢), former commander of the 38th Parallel Constabulary and later commander of the North Korean 2 Corps. Thus soon after the beginning of the war, the higher staff members of the North Korean army were KIM Il-song's men, and the removal of CH'OE Yong-kon completed KIM's domination of the military command.
3. By mid-November, however, KIM Il-song was faced with a shortage of trained military commanders. KANG Kon was dead, and CH'OE Kyong-tok, who had been sent to Manchuria in late October to reorganize the retreating North Korean troops, was assassinated by an unidentified subordinate in early November. CHANG Si-u was inexperienced. At this point, the possible re-emergence of KIM Mu-chong as a political as well as military threat to KIM's leadership\*\* added a new difficulty. Although he had been forced to disband the Korean Volunteer Army which he had brought back from China, KIM Mu-chong was named deputy Minister of National Defense and commander of the artillery when the

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North Korean government was set up, and he became commander of the North Korean 4 Corps when the war began.

4. In the retreat from the perimeter, KIM Mu-chong was in charge of regrouping North Korean forces but failed to keep order. HO Song-t'aek (許成澤), commander of guerrilla forces in South Korea, also failed to use his troops effectively. These two opportunities to place the responsibility for military reverses on men not directly associated with the pro-Soviet clique in the North Korean government and more particularly in the North Korean Labor Party were seized by KIM Il-song to insure that KIM Mu-chong would not become a center for Chinese Communist political pressure. A conference of the Central Committee of the North Korean Labor Party was called for 23 December 1950 in a small village near Kanggye. The date was set to permit an earlier meeting, on 19 December, before the official conference, of KIM Il-song, KIM Ch'aek, HO Ka-i, PAK Chang-ok, and CHANG Si-u with Soviet General Shitykov at the Soviet embassy, then in Manpojin.
5. In the official party meeting, the Central Committee expelled KIM Mu-chong from the party for inefficiency in conducting operations on the Taegu front; attempts to retain military caste practices, including the shooting of unidentified subordinates without following regular army procedures; and failure to reorganize, mobilize, and keep order with troops retreating to Manchuria through the Manpojin area. HO Song-t'aek was also expelled by the Central Committee for his failure to organize South Korean guerrillas effectively and especially to arrange advantageous cooperation between the North and South Korean Labor Parties. Since HO represented the South Korean Labor Party, his removal along with KIM Mu-chong's meant the neutralization at one stroke of both the South Korean and Chinese influences which threatened the Soviet bloc.\*\*\*
6. As additional safeguards, KIM Il-song increased the Soviet representation in the military organs by making KIM P'a chief of the army security agency, the Unit Training and Indoctrination Office (Tae Yul Po Ui Oho); adding more Soviet advisers to North Korean army units, even down to battalion level; and promoting Soviet-born Koreans to division commands. KIM Chin-uk, second son of KIM Il'aek, for example, a graduate of the Soviet Military Academy, was made commander of a division. These appointments were made in spite of the fact that the most successful division commanders during the North Korean retreat had been subordinates of KIM Mu-chong from the Volunteer Army, such as PAK Ho-san (朴孝三), commander of the 6 Division, given the title of hero because of the small number of casualties his troops suffered in the retreat; PANG Ho-san (方昊山), commander of the 7 Division, who was decorated for his orderly retreat and successful operations in the Changjin Reservoir area; and PAK Nam (白南), commander in the Taegon area early in the war.
7. Political interference with guerrilla activities in South Korea was a factor in their ineffectiveness. Originally PAK Hon-yong had tried to gain more power in the North Korean army through appointment of cultural deputy commanders whom he controlled, and failing this, had tried to claim control of political activities in occupied areas of South Korea. When he was strenuously opposed in this by HO Ka-i, he turned his attention to guerrilla activities. In an attempt to mobilize all members and former members of the South Korean Labor Party, PAK sent to Seoul YI Chong-op (李東翼), SKLP leader, and YI Chul-sang (李秋相), former head of the SKLP Labor Section, to set up a volunteer army headquarters and HO Song-t'aek to command the guerrillas. Not only did the troops under this command prove generally ineffective, but they were believed to have disrupted regular North Korean army activities in rear areas. Neither of the Seoul officials had had previous military experience, but this did not prevent the removal of HO Song-t'aek later.

25X1A\* [redacted] Comment. An incident of this type was also reported in September 1950.

25X1A \*\* [redacted] Comment. The background and position of KIM Mu-chong were discussed at length [redacted] 25X1A

25X1A \*\* [redacted] Comment. Factional in the North Korean government are discussed in [redacted] 25X1A